

WANTED: A HOME FOR A BABY



HEART of the SUNSET

BY REX BEACH

Author of "The Spoilers," "The Iron Trail," "The Silver Horde," Etc.



SYNOPSIS.

Chapter I—Set afoot and alone by an accident in the desert near the Rio Grande Mrs. Alaire Austin, mistress of Las Palmas and La Feria ranches, meets Dave Law, Texas ranger, at a water hole and is compelled to spend the night there with him, as he is in ambush for a murderer and cannot leave his post.

Chapter II—Next day at evening the murderer appears with a companion.

Chapter III—Law captures the murderer but is compelled to kill his companion, Panfilo Sanchez, who happens to be a cousin of Mrs. Austin's horse-breaker, Jose Sanchez.

Chapter IV—At Las Palmas Alaire tells her husband, Ed, that his carousals and inebriety must stop. Her cattle at La Feria, the Mexican ranch, are confiscated by Longorio, Mexican federal general, and she finds that it is because Ed has been helping the rebel junta.

Chapter V—On her way to La Feria in Mexico Alaire meets Longorio, who falls in love with her and agrees to settle for the confiscated stock.

When, after supper, Blaze had hitched a pair of driving mules to his buckboard, preparatory to shoving his guest the glories of Jonesville, Dave said:

"Paloma's getting mighty pretty." "She's as pretty as a blue-bonnet flower," he father agreed. "And she runs me ground something scandalous. I ain't got the freedom of a peon." Blaze sighed and shook his shaggy head. "You know me, Dave; I never used to be scared of nobody. Well, it's different now. She rides me with a Spanish bit, and my soul ain't my own." With a sudden lightning of his gloom, he added: "Say, you're going to stay right here with us as long as you're in town; I want you to see how I cringe."

In spite of Blaze's plaintive tone it was patent that he was inordinately proud of Paloma and well content with his girlfriend.

Jonesville proved to be a typical Texas town of the modern variety, and altogether different to the pictured frontier village. All in all, the effect was much like that of a prosperous, orderly northern farming town. To its happy founder it seemed well-nigh perfect, and its destiny roused his maddest enthusiasm. He pointed out the Odd Fellows hall, the Palace Picture theater, with its glaring orange lights and discordant electric piano; he conducted Law to the First National bank, of which Blaze was a proud but somewhat ornamental director; then to the sugar mill, the ice plant and other points of equally novel interest.

Everywhere he went Jones was hailed by friends, for everybody seemed to know him and to want to shake his hand.

"Some town and some body of men," he inquired, finally, and Dave agreed:

"Yes. She's got a grand framework, Blaze. She'll be most as big as Fort Worth when you fatten her up."

Jones waved his buggy whip in a wide circle that took in the miles of level prairie on all sides. "We've got the whole blamed state to grow in. And, Dave, I haven't got an enemy in the place! It wasn't many years ago that certain people allowed I'd never live to raise this town. Why, it used to be that nobody dared ride with me—except Paloma, and she used to sleep with a shotgun at her bedside."

"You sure have been a responsibility to her."

"But I'm as safe now as if I was in church."

Law ventured to remark that none of Blaze's enemies had grown fat in prosecuting their feuds, but this was a subject which the older man invariably found embarrassing, and now he said:

"Pshaw! I ever was the bloodiest of bloodhounds. Was as gentle as a sheep." Then to escape further en-

quiry on that point, he suggested that they round out their riotous evening with a game of pool.

The next morning at breakfast Paloma announced, "Father, you must help Dave hunt down these cattle thieves."

"Ain't that sort of a big order?" Blaze queried.

"Perhaps, but you're the very man to do it. Ricardo Guzman is the only person who knows the Lewis gang as well as you do."

Jones shook his head doubtfully. "Don Ricardo has been working up his own private feud with that outfit. If I was the kind that went looking for a fight, I wouldn't have paid freight on myself from the Panhandle down here. I could have got one right at home, any morning before breakfast."

"Ricardo Guzman is something of a black sheep himself," Law spoke up. "Ishaw! He's all right. I reckon he has changed a few brands in his time, but so has everybody else. Why, that's how 'Old Ed' Austin got his start. If a cowboy tells you he never stole anything, he's either a good liar or a bad noper. But Ricardo's going straight enough now."

"He has lost his share of stock," Paloma explained, "and he'll work with you if father asks him. You go along with Dave."

"I'm too busy," Blaze demurred, "and I ain't feeling good. I had bad dreams all night."

"I don't want you around me here this morning. That new dressmaker is coming."

Jones rose abruptly from the table. "I reckon my business can wait. Hustle up, Dave." A few moments later, as they were saddling their horses, he lamented: "What did I tell you? Here I go, on the doggie from a dressmaker. I s'pose I've got to live like a road-agent now, till something happens."

Don Ricardo Guzman was an American, but he spoke no English. An accident of birth had made him a citizen of the United States—his father having owned a ranch which lay north instead of south of the Rio Grande, inasmuch as the property had fallen to Ricardo, his sons, too, were Yankees in the eyes of the law. But in all other respects Don Ricardo and his family differed not at all from the many Guzmans who lived across the border. The Guzman ranch comprised a goodly number of acres, and, since live stock multiplied rapidly, its owner had in some sort prospered. On the bank of a resaca—a former bed of the Rio Grande—stood the house, an adobe structure, square, white and unprotected from the sun by shrub or tree. Behind it were some brush corrals and a few scattered mud jacals, in which lived the help.

Ricardo had just risen from a siesta when his two visitors rode up, and he made them welcome with the best he had. In the cool of the afternoon Ricardo rode with his visitors, and then, cordial relations being now established, he began to divulge information of value to Law.

Yes, he had endured many depredations from thieves. It was shameful, but doubtless God would that a certain amount of stealing should go on in the world. The evidences were certainly favored by nature, in this locality, for the great expanse of brush country to the north and east offered almost perfect security, and the river, to the south, gave immunity from pursuit or prosecution. The beavers were driven north into the wilderness, but the horses went to Mexico, where the year had created a market for them. The Guzmans had plenty of money to buy mounts.

Whom did Don Ricardo suspect?

The old man was noncommittal. Suspicion was one thing, proof was quite another; and conviction was difficult under the best of circumstances. Why, even a cow's recognition of her own calf was not evidence for a court,

and alibis were easily proved. Unless the thieves were caught in the very act there was no case against them, and—por Dios!—one could not be forever on guard. Who could tell where the malefactors would strike next? Now, in Mexico one could afford to kill an undesirable neighbor without so much formality. But, thank God! Don Ricardo was not a Mexican. No, he was a good American citizen. It was something to make him sleep well in these war times.

"Just the same, I'll bet he'd sleep better if the Lewis outfit was cleaned up," Dave ventured, and Blaze agreed. Guzman caught his enemy's name, and nodded.

"Ah! That sin verguenza! He sells arms to the Candelistas and horses to the Potosistas. Perhaps he steals my calves. Who knows?"

"Senior Lewis doesn't need to steal. He has money," Jones argued.

"True! But who is so rich that he would not be richer? Lewis employs men who are poor, and he himself is above nothing. I, too, am a friend of the rebels. Panchito, the Liberator, was a saint, and I give money to the patriots who fight for his memory. But I do not aid the tyrant Potosi with my other hand. Yes, and who is richer, for instance, than Senior Eduardo Austin?"

"You surely don't accuse him of double-dealing with the rebels? Blaze inquired excitedly.

"I don't know. He is a friend of Ted Lewis, and there are strange stories about."

Just what these stories were, however, Ricardo would not say, feeling, perhaps that he had already said too much. The three men spent that evening together, and in the morning Blaze rode home, leaving the Ranger behind for the time being as Guzman's guest.

Dave put in the next two days riding the pastures, familiarizing himself with the country, and talking with the few men he met. About all he discovered, however, was the fact that the Guzman range not only adjoined some of Lewis' leased land, but also was bounded for several miles by the Las Palmas fence.

It was pleasant to spend the days among the shy brush-cutters, with Bessie Belle for company. The mare seemed to enjoy the excursions as much as her owner. Her eyes and ears were ever alert; she tossed her head, and snorted when a deer broke cover or a jackrabbit scuttled out of her path; she showed a friendly interest in the awkward calves which stood and eyed her with such amazement and then galloped stiffly off with tails high arched. Law had many times undertaken to break Bessie Belle of that habit of flinging her head high in sudden sounds, but she was nervous and inquisitive, and this was the one thing upon which she maintained a feminine obstinacy.

On the second evening the Ranger rode home through a drizzle that had materialized after a long, threatening afternoon and now promised to become a real rain. Ricardo met him at the door to say:

"You bring good fortune with you, senior, for the land is thirsty. To-morrow, if this rain holds, we shall ride together—your, Pedro and I. Those thieves do their stealing when they leave no tracks."

The sky was leaden, the rain still fell in the morning when Dave and his two companions set out. Until afternoon they rode, their slickers dripping, swaying to the tireless trot of their steaming horses, their eyes engaged in a watchful scrutiny.

At last Pedro, who was ahead, reined in and pointed: the others saw where the barbed-wire strands of the fence they had been following were clipped. A number of horse and calf tracks led through the opening, and after an examination Ricardo announced:

"There are two men. They have come and gone, with the calves tied neck and neck."

"That is Las Palmas, isn't it?" Law indicated the pasture into which the trail led.

Father and son answered, "Si, senior."

For a time the Ranger lounged sideways in his saddle, studying the country before him. Perhaps a half-mile away a long, narrow patch of woods, with the tops of occasional oaks showing, ran parallel with the fence for a considerable distance.

"They took them in yonder, to brand," he said, straightening himself. "Maybe we'll be in time."

Side by side the three men rode off Guzman's land, following the tracks to the nearest point of woods; there Law stopped to give his directions.

"Pedro, you ride down this side; Ricardo, you skirt the outside. I shall keep to the middle. Walk your horses, for I shall go slowly." With a dubious

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Wanted

WANTED—A millinery apprentice. Apply at Bonnet Shop, Central Life Bldg., second floor.

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shake of the head Ricardo rode away, while Dave guided Bessie Belle into the grove.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

HEALTH HINT FOR TODAY.

Cold Weather Rules For the Baby. Don't let people fondle the baby, particularly if they have colds. They convey them to the baby.

Don't let strangers kiss the baby.

Keep baby warm and dry. Wet or damp clothing should be removed at once and dry substituted.

Don't put too many clothes on the baby. If after a trip in the open air it is cold put more clothing on. If it is perspiring it needs fewer clothes. After a trip in the air baby should be warm and dry.

Give baby plenty of fresh air and sunlight and guard against abrupt changes of temperature.

Healthy children should have plenty of fresh milk and fruit.

Never give baby a sip of beer, tea or coffee.

Keep baby's clothing loose at all times and let it kick.

Give baby proper nourishment. If a baby does not gain in weight every week there is something wrong, and a doctor should be consulted.

Anyway, he holds them together

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The Answer.

Three little boys were playing on the beach. One had pilled and patted and coaxed the sand into a resemblance to a racing car, another had constructed with fair success a touring car, but what the third little fellow had made was without form and void.

"What is your car?" he was asked. He looked rather uncertain until the questioner continued, "Yours looks like two or three together."

"That's what it is," he said loftily; "mine's a collision!"—New York Post.

In Mexico there grows a tree called the "tree of little hands." It is so called owing to the fact that its five curved anthers look like the fingers of a child.

A physician says that ten minutes of worry are more enervating than a week of work.

Announcements.

For Commissioner. Thomas Morgan desires to announce himself as a candidate for Highway Commissioner for the town of Ottawa subject to the decision of the Democratic town primaries.

For Commissioner. James White announces himself as a candidate for Highway Commissioner subject to the decision of the Democratic town primaries.

For Commissioner. Jule F. Vallat desires to announce himself as a candidate for highway commissioner, subject to the decision of the Democratic town primary.

Professional Cards

M. N. ARMSTRONG,
Attorney at law, 210-211 Moloney Bldg., Ottawa, Illinois. Telephone: Office, 373-W. Residence, 312-Y.

L. W. BREWER,
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being a part of said Lot Nine (9), together with all and singular the tenements and hereditaments thereunto belonging.

Terms of Sale: Cash in hand on day of sale.

HARRY G. COOK,
Master in Chancery.
Dated, Ottawa, Ill., February 5, A. D. 1917.

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Cars arrive from the west at 8:45 a. m., 7:45 p. m., 9:45 p. m., 11:35 p. m., 1:00 a. m.

WESTBOUND.

Westbound cars leave Ottawa station for Chautauqua Park, Starved Rock, Utica, La Salle, Peru, Spring Valley, Ladd, DePue, Bureau and Princeton.

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